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EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 506/90 "Disappearance"/Possible Extra-Judicial Execution 17 December 1990

PHILIPPINES: Sotero DEL MONTE (aged 60)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Sotero Del Monte, a farmer, who was reportedly arrested at gunpoint on 21 November 1990 by military officials from the 52nd Infantry Battalion (IB), Bravo Company, in barangay Caamlongan, Calbiga, Samar province.

According to Sotero del Monte's wife and daughter, about 27 soldiers, arrived at their home at approximately 9pm on 21 November. They were accompanied by another person, said to be a former member of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Sotero del Monte took a kerosene lamp and opened the door. He was then apparently ordered to put out the light as the soldiers forced their way into the house. The soldiers bound his hands and feet and dragged him outside the house. Meanwhile, other soldiers were reported to have looted the family's shop. As Sotero del Monte was taken away, his wife and daughter said they tried to accompany him but were stopped by four gunshots fired at the ground, just a few inches from their feet.

The following day relatives visited Sotero Del Monte at the 52nd IB detachment in Calbiga, where he was being held in custody. They reported that he was suffering from severe pains which were said to have been the result of torture. The visit was cut short when officials ordered the family to leave. Sotero del Monte has not been seen since then, and family members have expressed fears that he may have been the victim of an extra-judicial execution by the military authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As part of the government's campaign to crush the armed insurgency in the Philippines, villages in rural areas alleged to be NPA strongholds have been bombed and strafed by military forces. Villagers suspected of being NPA sympathizers have been ill-treated, "disappeared" or killed by government and government-backed forces.

"Disappearances" have been reported at an alarming rate in the Philippines over the last year. Amnesty International received information regarding more than 50 "disappearances" in the period from December 1989 to mid-November 1990, compared to a total of about 40 reports of "disappearance" in 1989. Some of the "disappeared" have been found dead, apparently killed by military, or paramilitary forces. Others have been located after being held incommunicado and without charge for long periods in military custody.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of Sotero del Monte, last seen on 22 November 1990 in the custody of soldiers from the 52nd IB, Bravo Company of the Philippines Army;

- urging that the whereabouts of Sotero del Monte are made known immediately, and for him to be released without delay if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair and independent trial;

- calling for an immediate investigation into this case, and asking to be informed of the progress of the investigation;

- urging that effective measures be taken to protect Sotero del Monte's safety, including granting him immediate access to an independent lawyer, a doctor, and members of his family.

APPEALS TO

Brig. Gen. Renato V. Palma
Commanding Officer

VISCOM Headquarters
Camp Lapu-Lapu

Cebu City, Philippines
6716 Samar, Philippines

**Telegrams: Brig Gen Palma, VISCOM HQ,
Camp Lapu-Lapu, Cebu City, Philippines**

Brig-Gen Romulo Yap
Commanding Officer
8th Infantry Division
Camp Lukban
Maulong
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6700 Samar, Philippines

**Telegrams: CO, 8 Infantry Division,
Camp Lukban, Catbalogan, Samar,
Philippines**

President Corazon Aquino
Malacañang Palace,
Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: President Aquino,
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(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

Col. Pedrito Magsino
52nd Infantry Battalion

Parasanon
Pinabacdao

6716 Samar, Phillipines

**Telegrams: CO 52 Infantry Batallion
Panabacdao, Samar, Philippines**

Rep Venancio Garduce
2nd District of Samar
Batasan Pambansa Complex
Constitution Hill
1119 Quezon City, Philippines

**Telegrams: Rep Garduce, Batasan
Pambansa Complex, Quezon City,
Philippines**

General Fidel V. Ramos
Secretary of National Defense
Department of National Defence
Camp General Emiliano Aguinaldo
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COPIES TO:

Mary Concepcion Bautista
Chairman
Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building Complex
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Pasig Metro Manila, Philippines

and to diplomatic representatives of the Philippines in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 February 1990.